

Aug. 16 1971  
(-3)





March 19. 1880.

J. T. Campbell

~~Midway Lodge~~  
Rough Notes ~~Winkerton~~

ON THE

SNAKE SYMBOL IN INDIA,  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
WORSHIP OF SIVA,

BY

J. H. RIVETT-CARNAC, ESQ.,  
BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

*Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire. Fellow of the University of Bombay.  
Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

*Fellow of the Geological Society. Corresponding*

*Member of the Imperial Museum,  
Vienna, &c. &c.*

---

REPRINTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY  
OF BENGAL.

---

CALCUTTA.

1879.





Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

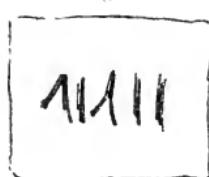


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

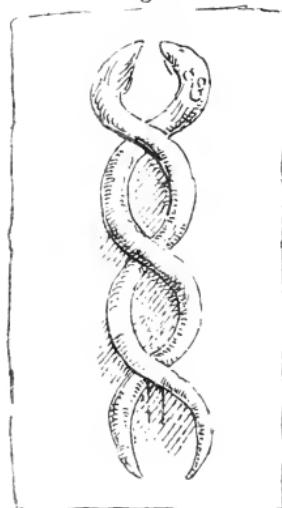


Fig. 5.

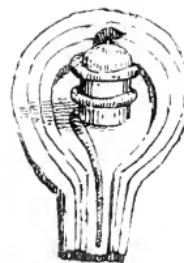


Fig. 6.

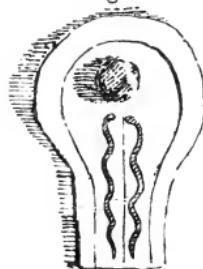
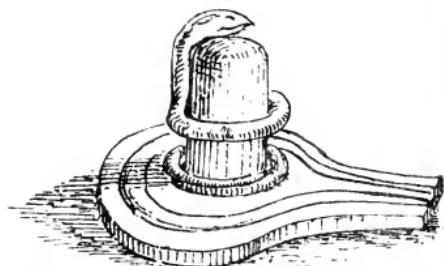


Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



A. E. Gadda, del.

H. Rivett-Carnac, fec.

Photocincographed at the Surveyor General's Office Calcutta

# THE SNAKE SYMBOL IN INDIA,

ESPECIALLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORSHIP OF ŚIVA.

By

J. H. RIVETT-CARNAC, Esq., C. I. E., F. S. A., M. B. A. S., &c.

In his work on "Tree and Serpent Worship" Mr. Fergusson has urged the desirability of workers in the rich field of Indian Antiquarian research collecting information regarding the worship of the snake, which is known to prevail in various forms in many parts of India.

The accompanying instalment of rough jottings and sketches, made at various times, has been worked up by me into the present imperfect shape during the Christmas holidays. It is now submitted to the Society in the hope that this paper, although doubtless full of faults, may at least induce discussion, and thereby assist in placing me on the right track, and in awakening further interest in this important subject amongst those who have better opportunity than I have of following it up.

The snake as a personal ornament, or as a canopy surmounting the figure, is not, of course, confined to representations of Śiva, and in the collection of the deities of the Hindu Pantheon that I have been able to make, the five-headed snake (Nág panchamukhi) is to be seen overshadowing Vishnu, Garuḍa and others. The Sesha or Ananta in the pictures of Vishnu is well known. Still, as Moor says at p. 36 of his Hindu Pantheon, "As emblems of immortality, serpents are common ornaments with many deities. But Mahádeo seems most abundantly bedecked with them; bound in his hair, round his neck, wrist, waist, arms and legs, as well as for rings, snakes are his constant attendants."

The serpent appears on the prehistoric cromlechs and menhirs of Europe, on which, as stated in my paper on the Kamáon Rock-carvings published in the Society's Journal for January 1877, I believe, the remains of phallic worship may also be traced. What little attention I have been able to give to the serpent-symbol, has been chiefly in its connection with the worship of Mahádeo or Śiva, with a view to ascertain whether the worship of the snake and that of Mahádeo or the phallus may be considered identical, and whether the presence of the serpent on the prehistoric remains of Europe can be shewn to support my theory that the markings on the cromlechs and menhirs are indeed the traces of this form of worship, carried to Europe from the East by the tribes whose remains are buried beneath the tumuli.

During my visits to Benares, the chief centre of Śiva worship in India, I have always carefully searched for the presence of the snake-symbol. On the most ordinary class of "Mahádeo," a rough stone placed on end supposed to represent the phallus, the serpent is not generally seen.

But in the temples and in the better class of shrines which abound in the city and the neighbourhood, the snake is generally found encircling the phallus in the manner shewn in Plate VI, fig. 8.

The tail of the snake is sometimes carried down the *yoni*, and in one case I found two snakes on a shrine in the manner figured in Plate VI, fig. 5, 6.

In the Benares bazar I once came across a splendid metal cobra, the head erect and hood expanded, so made as to be placed around and above a stone or metal "Mahádeo." It is now in England. The attitude of the cobra when excited and the expansion of the head will suggest the reason for this snake representing Mahádeo and the phallus.

In several instances in Benares, I have found the Nág surrounding and surmounting the hump of the "Nandi" or Śiva's Bull. In such cases the hump is apparently recognised as a Mahádeo, as the remains of flowers, libations and other offerings were found thereon.

I hardly venture to suggest that the existence of the hump is the reason for the Nandi being selected as the *Vahan* or "vehicle" of Śiva. But the circumstance may be worth noticing. I am of course aware that the Bull is a symbol of generation and reproduction, traceable to its position in the Zodiae at the Vernal Equinox. But it may have been recognised as Śiva's Vahan, long before the honor was assigned to it of introducing it into the Equinox. And its position with regard to Śiva may have secured for it this important place in the signs of the Zodiae.

The snake in conjunction with Mahádeo is further to be traced in several of the metal specimens of the collection now forwarded for the inspection of the Society. In two small shrines, containing "Ganas" or assemblages of deities, of which the Mahádeo or Linga is the centre, the Nág or cobra can be seen to hold the chief position at the back of the shrine. In a remarkable bracelet purchased in Benares, consisting of a mass of Mahádeos and yonis, many of which are arranged in circles like cromlechs, the serpent can be traced encircling the phallus. It is again to be seen forming the handle of a spoon and surmounting the figure of Ganesha, Śiva's son, wherewith holy Ganges-water is taken from the cup, and sprinkled over the Mahádeo by pilgrims and worshippers at the shrines of Benares and other Śiva temples. It is seen again in the sacrificial lamp, used in the same worship. In the centre of the lamp is a space for a small "Mahádeo," an agate in the shape of an egg, brought, it is said, from Banda and the hilly country of the Nerbudda, rich in these pebbles, which are imported annually in large quantities into Benares. And the snake-canopy can be recognised again forming the back-ground of the shrine of the figure of *Anna-Purna Devi*, a form of Śiva's śakti Parvati. The snake is present

again in a specimen where Śiva's Bull or Nandi supports the Lotus, representing the female or watery principle, and within which is enclosed an agate egg (the jewel of the lotus?), representing Mahádeo or the male principle. Above this is a small pierced vessel which should contain Ganges water, to trickle through the aperture and keep anointed the sacred stone placed beneath it. The vessel or *loṭa* is supported by a Nág or cobra, the head erect, the hood expanded, forming the conventional canopy of the shrines of Śiva.

The serpent with the tree is to be seen on the canopies of shrines. In one case the shrine with a cobra-canopy has the Linga and yoni or Mahádeo complete.

Most of the other canopies, as I will call these backs of shrines, were purchased as old brass or old copper, and the deities belonging to them had perhaps long since been broken up and melted down. In some of them the tree, with the serpent twisted round the trunk, is very distinct. One of them has been figured by me in the annexed sketch, Plate VII, fig. 3. I was hardly prepared to find the tree and the serpent together in this form, in a shrine apparently used comparatively recently, if not in the present day, and I hope for some explanation of these interesting symbols from Dr. Rájendra-lála Mitra, or some other authority.\*

The Bell, sent with the collection on which a hooded snake overshadows the figures of Garúda and Hanumán, seems, from these figures, to be adaptable for use at a shrine of either Vishnu or Śiva. Lastly, the brass models represent the cobra with head erect and hood expanded, the design somewhat elaborated and ornamented. Although, in one of them at least, there is no space for the Mahádeo, these Nágs are, I am assured, considered symbolical of life or generation, and as such are worshipped as Śiva or Mahádeo or the Linga or Phallus or whatever it may be called.

All these specimens were picked up in the metal bazar in Benares, where the fashionable trays, "specimen-vases," and much Philistine work are now made and exposed for sale. In most cases the specimens were raked out with difficulty from among sacks containing old metal, collected to be broken up and melted down for the manufacture of the brass-ware now in vogue.

Although the presence of the snake in these models cannot be said to prove much, and although from the easy adaptability of its form, the snake must always have been a favourite subject in ornament, still it will be seen that the serpent is prominent in connection with the conventional shape under which Mahádeo is worshipped at Benares and elsewhere, that it sometimes even takes the place of the Linga, and that it is to be found entwined with almost every article connected with this worship.

\* See Appendix, p. 31.

It might be expected that the Nág or Cobra would be seen at its best in the carvings or idols of Nágeshwar, the Cobra or Snake Temple of Benares. But in this I was disappointed ; Nágeshwar, as I saw it, consisted of two temples, or an inner and outer shrine, the one called Sideshwar, the other Nágeshwar. In the outer or Nágeshwar shrine was a large sized stone Mahádeo, of ordinary construction without the snake on it or round it. The old woman in charge of the temple, the priest being absent, assured me that a snake had once surmounted the Mahádeo, but that the symbol had been worn away by much veneration. The story was most probably manufactured for the occasion in consequence of my manifest disappointment at the absence of the Nág.

A Bull or Nandi and a Cobra faced the Mahádeo. The contents of the inner temple were peculiar. The Mahádeo consists of a broad black stone in shape something like a tumulus. It is sunk some little depth below the ground, and is surrounded by four stone slabs forming a small square tank. There was no yoni with this Mahádeo, the tank perhaps representing the yoni. On the top of the Mahádeo had been traced, with some sort of white pigment, a circle with a central dot or cup mark, exactly similar in shape to the circles with centres noticed in my paper on the Kumáon Rock-markings. These marks are common enough at Benares, and are to be seen painted on the bamboo umbrellas which line the ghats and are also dabbed about freely on the walls of buildings. Further enquiry has confirmed the opinion expressed by me and supported by Mr. Campbell of Islay in my paper on Kumáon rock markings, that, whatever it may have meant in Europe, in India the sign ☺ means Mahádeo. There seems to be little doubt that at Nágeshwar the snake god is Mahádeo himself, or that he is worshipped under that name, and that Nágeshwar is a temple of Siva or Mahádeo in the form of a Nág or cobra.

These same marks were to be seen on a Mahádeo in a small shrine under a tree close by. In front of Nágeshwar were the graves of the Gosains of the temple. They resemble the graves of Chandeshwar in Kumáon, noticed in my paper on the Kumáon Rock Markings. The Kumáon graves were evidently the graves of Gosains of the Siva sect who I have since learnt are always buried, not burnt.\* At Benares, as at Chandeshwar,

\* *Tide* Tod's Rajasthan, Vol. I, p. 445. "The priests of Eklinga are termed "Gosain or Gosicami which signifies control over the senses. The distinguishing mark "of the faith of Siva is the crescent on the forehead. They bury their dead in a sit- "ting posture, and erect cairns over them which are generally conical in form. I "have seen a cemetery of these, each of very small dimensions, which may be described

a platform had been raised above the grave, on the top of which were placed a Mahádeo and yoni. A representation of Siva's Trident and the soles of two feet, not unlike those figured in Fergusson's Eastern Architecture, were also noticed on the grave.

Our cicerone informed us that the feet were represented here in order that pilgrims might fall down and worship at the feet of the Gosain, who, dying, had become a saint and deserving of worship.

A visit in search of the snake symbol to the Nág Kuan, or serpent well, was rewarded with better success. The well itself is described by the Rev. Mr. Sherring in his "Sacred City of the Hindus," from which I may be permitted to quote the following passage :

"The Nág Kúan or serpent's well is situated in a ward of the city called after the name of the well Nág Kúan Mahalla, which adjoins the Ausán Gang Mahalla. This well bears marks of considerable antiquity ; and from the circumstance of an extensive district of Benares being designated by its name, there is no doubt that it must be regarded as one of the oldest historical places the present city possesses. The construction of this well was, probably, nearly, if not quite coeval with the building of the Mahalla or ward itself, which, we may imagine, was described as that part of the city containing the well—the well being the most important and noticeable object there : and, so gradually, the inhabitants associated the Mahalla with the well, and called them by the same name. The ward is in the north-western part of the city, at some distance from the Ganges. The quarter lying to the east of this ward, that is, between it and the Ganges, is, as I have already remarked, in all likelihood, the oldest portion of the present city ; and, therefore, the Nág-Kúan ward would have been originally in its suburbs. It is even possible that one of the first places built in these suburbs, and frequented by the people, was this well, and that its existence was one of the reasons, perhaps the chief, for the settling of a population in its neighbourhood. No person in Benares can tell when the well was made ; but there is a reference to its existence in the Kasi-Khanda.

"Steep stone stairs, in the form of a square, lead down to the well ; and a broad wall of good masonry, six or seven feet thick, surrounds them at their summit, rising to the height of four or five feet above the ground. Each of the four series of stairs has an entrance of its own. Their junction below forms a small square, in the centre of which is the well. De-

"as so many concentric rings of earth diminishing to the apex crowned with a cylindrical stone pillar."

Now may not the circular tomb have represented the womb or yoni of mother earth, the corpse, which is to be born again to a new life, being placed in the position as in the mother's womb ?

scending twelve stone steps you reach the water which is stagnant and foul. Beneath the water is a sheet of iron, which constitutes the door leading to a still lower well, which perhaps may be the old well in its original state. The stairs, I suspect, are not of great date. On the inside of those to the east is an inscription, to the effect that, in 1825 Samvat, or nearly one hundred years ago, a Rájá extensively repaired the well. It is possible he may have built the stairs then. Many of the slabs of stone of which they are composed display carvings on their external surfaces, some of which bear unmistakeable marks of considerable antiquity. These slabs were doubtless taken from dilapidated buildings in the neighbourhood. A thorough examination of them, especially of the more ancient among them, would, I am satisfied, be not unproductive of interesting results. The wall was also repaired by Mr. Prinsep about thirty years ago.

"At this well the Nág or serpent is worshipped. In a niche in the wall of one of the stairs is a figure representing three serpents; and, on the floor, is an emblem of Mahádeo in stone, with a snake crawling up it. The well is visited, for religious purposes, only once in the year, namely, on the 24th and 25th days of the month Sawan, when immense numbers of persons come to it, on pilgrimage, from all parts of the city. The women come on the first day, and the men on the second. They offer sacrifices both to the well and to Nágeshwar, or the serpent-god". (*Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus.*)

The well does not seem to attract much attention during most months of the year. I have often passed it and seen but few people there. In the dry season, there is little or no water in it. But the "Nág Panchami"—is a gala day at the well, and I believe at most Siva temples. The Mahádeo from the neighbouring temple of "Nágeshwar" is brought to the third step of the stairs on the west side of the tank surmounting the well, and Hindus of all classes come in thousands to adore the Mahádeo and bathe in the well, which, as the "Nág Panchami" Fair is held in July, or during the rains, is filled with water at this season. On the fourth step of the stairs above mentioned, are six circular holes, each  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and about 4 inches deep arranged in a row. Being always on the look out for "cup marks," I immediately noticed these holes, but the Bráhman in attendance explained that they were intended to collect the libations poured over the Mahádeo, and which trickled down from the gutter above. The same idea, Dr. Keller informed me at Zurieh, exists in Switzerland, regarding these cup marks. And from a paper, recently received from the Society of Antiquaries of France, I learn that cup marks are frequently found on stones and slabs in the founda-

tions and walls of old churches in the north of Europe. To the right of the spot where the Mahádeo is placed, three stone slabs or panels, apparently of great age, have been let into the wall. On one of these, two cobras standing on their tails (see Plate VI, fig. 7) have been roughly carved. On the next are two cobras intertwined in the attitude mentioned by Mr. Fergusson in the Appendix to his work on "Tree and Serpent worship." The cobras are somewhat battered, but the spectacle marks on one is still traceable (see Plate VI, fig. 4). The third slab contains a head, also much battered and weather-worn, which has been at one time surmounted by an ornament of some kind, possibly a cobra, but the form of which is no longer distinguishable. The heads of the twin cobras and of the human figure are all freely daubed with red paint, shewing their sacredness in the eyes of the Hindu visitors. The slabs appear to be very old and to have been collected from the ruins of some old temple.

To the left and some steps lower down, is a niche or shrine containing an ordinary Mahádeo and yoni with cobra twined round it as shewn in the sketch (Plate VI, fig. 8).

Behind on a tablet or panel, let into the wall, is the head of a cobra, roughly carved, and of the same character and style as the cobras above noticed. On a smaller panel to the right, two snakes are again represented intertwined, but shewing one twist less than in the pair previously noticed. Below the panel are the rough marks as shewn in the sketch (Plate VI, fig. 2) which may be either the remains of a rough inscription or perhaps of chisel or mason's marks. In two other places also was the twin snake symbol found. In the one case, the snakes are intertwined with apparently an egg between the two heads (Plate VI, fig. 3). In the other, the snakes are not intertwined and the egg appears to have been broken (Plate VI, fig. 7). These tablets or slabs appear to be of great antiquity. There seemed to be little doubt here, that the snakes were worshipped at the "Nág Kuán" as representing Mahádeo, and the act of congress, in which the snakes are represented as engaged, suggests the connection of these symbols with Siva worship.

Whilst on the subject of the snake well or tank, I would notice that snake wells are frequently found attached to temples of Mahádeo. I saw such a well recently in Kumáon close to the temple of Mahádeo, below the monoliths worshipped as representing Mahádeo, on the road between Almorah and Dévi Dhoora. A snake was supposed to inhabit the tank or well. I venture to throw out the suggestion, that the snake in the well may represent the post, or Mahádeo, in the tank, the well representing the yoni or tank as explained by Moor in his "Hindu Pantheon." The mysterious snake inhabiting the well is, of course, not confined to India; and

Schwallbach, and other snake wells in Europe will suggest themselves to many.

Later I visited the Benares Palace of the Rajahs of Nágpúr situated on the Ganges and built in the palmy days of the Bhonslahs, and when a visit to Benares was frequently undertaken by some of the family or its chief dependents. In a shrine within the buildings, I found the Mahádeo represented by a cobra or Nág, the coils of which were so elaborately intertwined as to make an accurate sketch of the arrangement a matter of no small difficulty. Here the Nág is certainly worshipped as a Mahádeo or phallus. The much intertwined Nág is shewn in Plate VII, fig. 1.

The Palace of the Bhonslahs at Benares brings me to Nágpúr, where, many years ago, I commenced to make, with but small success, some rough notes on serpent worship. Looking up some old sketches, I find that the Mahádeo in the oldest temples at Nágpúr is surmounted by the Nág as at Benares. And in the old temple near the palace of Nágpúr, or city of the Nág or cobra, is a five-headed snake elaborately coiled as shewn in Fig. 2, Plate VII. The Bhonslahs apparently took the many-coiled Nág with them to Benares. A similar representation of the Nág is found in the temple near the Itwarah gate at Nágpúr. Here again the Nág or cobra is certainly worshipped as Mahádeo or the phallus, and as already noticed, there are certain obvious points connected with the position assumed by the cobra when excited, and the expansion of the hood, which suggest the reason for this snake, in particular, being adopted as a representation of the phallus and an emblem of Siva.

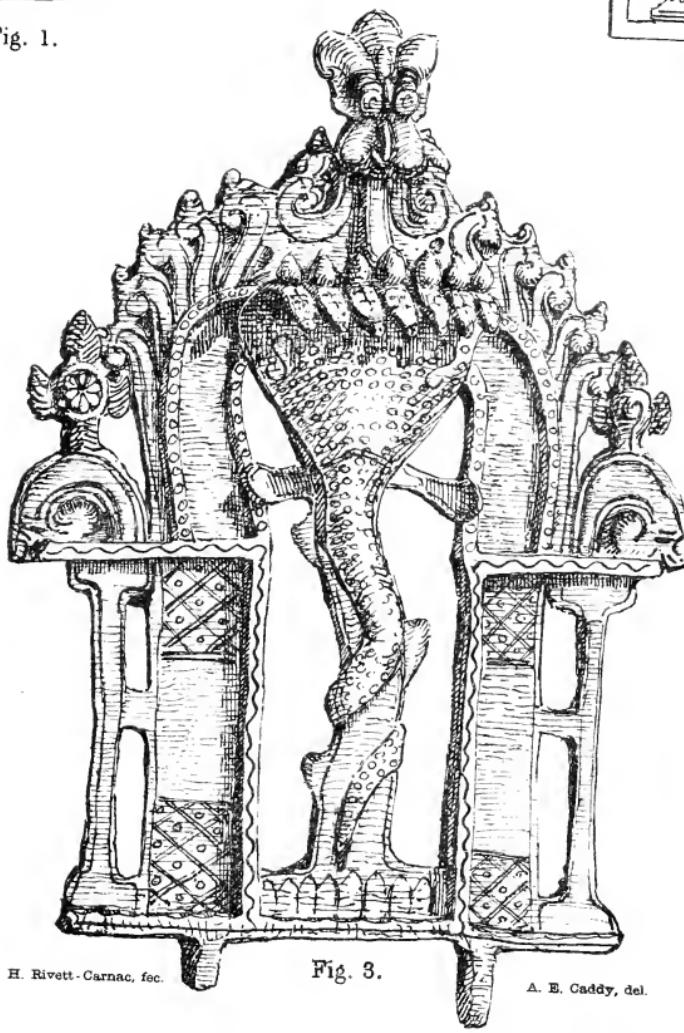
The worship of the snake is very common in the old Nágpúr Province where, especially among the lower class, the votaries of Siva or *Nág bhu-shan*, "he who wears snakes as his ornaments," are numerous. It is likely enough that the City took its name from the Nág temple, still to be seen there, and that the river Nág perhaps took its name from the city or temple, and not the city from the river, as some think. Certain it is that many of the Kunbi or cultivating class worship the snake, and the snake only, and that this worship is something more than the ordinary superstitious awe, with which all Hindus regard the snake. I find from my notes that one Kunbi whom I questioned in old days, when I was a Settlement Officer in Camp in the Nágpúr Division, stated that he worshipped the Nág and nothing else; that he worshipped clay images of the snake, and when he could afford to pay snake-catchers for a look at a live one, he worshipped the living snake; that if he saw a Nág on the road, he would worship it, and that he believed no Hindu would kill a Nág or cobra, if he knew it were a Nág. He then gave me the following list of articles he would use in wor-



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

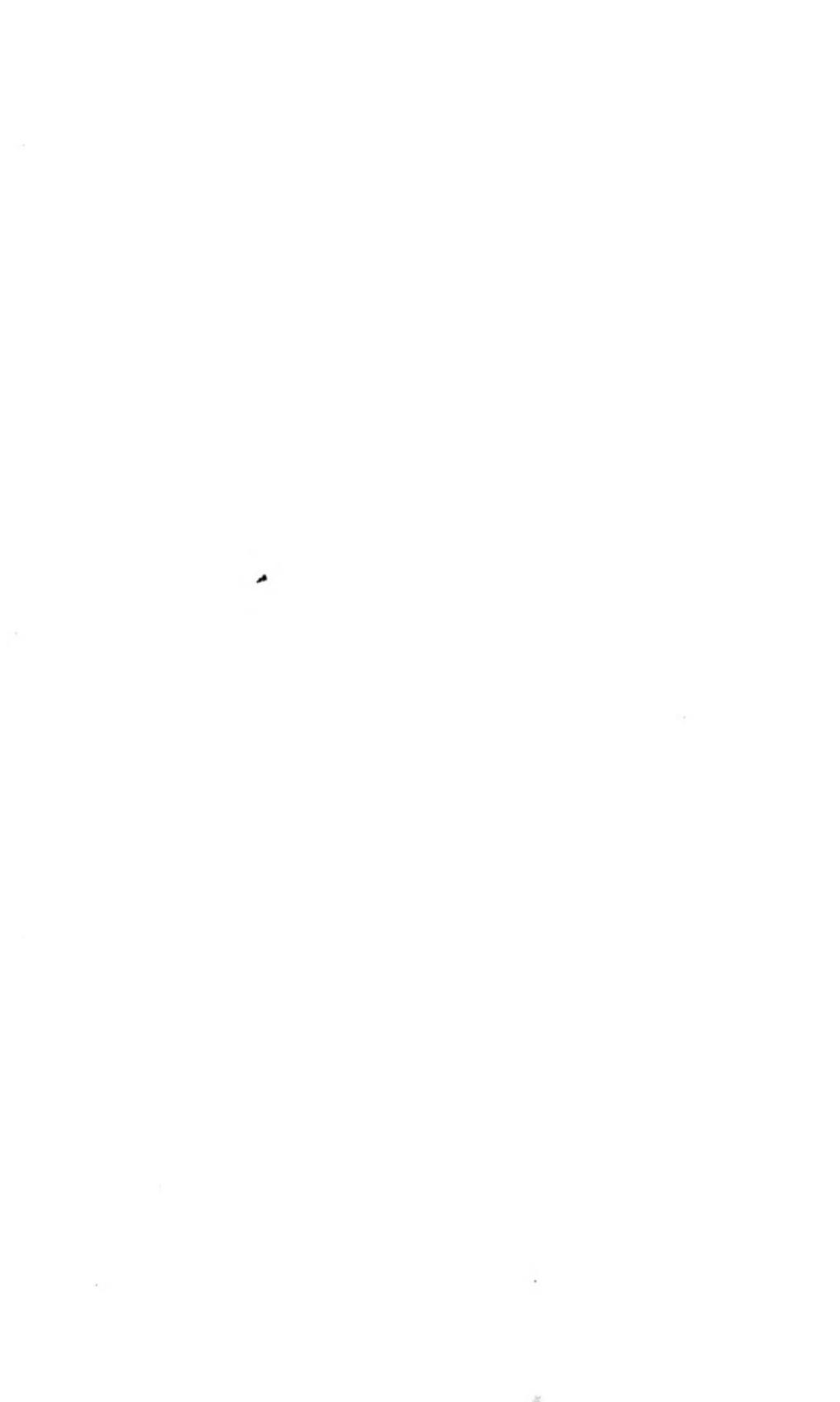


H. Rivett-Carnac, fec.

Fig. 3.

A. E. Caddy, del.

Photocinographed at the Surveyor General's Office, Calcutta.



shipping the snake, when he could afford it; and I take it, the list is similar to what would be used in ordinary Siva worship.

1. Water.
2. *Gandh*, pigment of sandalwood for the forehead or body.
3. Cleaned rice.
4. Flowers.
5. Leaves of the Bail Tree.
6. Milk.
7. Curds.
8. A thread or piece of cloth.
9. Red powder.
10. Saffron.
11. *Abir*, a powder composed of fragrant substances (?)
12. Garlands of flowers.
13. *Buttemah* or gram soaked and parched.
14. *Jowarri* (*hocolus sorghum*) do.
15. Five lights.
16. Sweetmeats.
17. Betel leaves.
18. Coconuts, or nut.
19. A sum of money (according to means).
20. Flowers offered by the suppliant, the palms of the hands being joined.

All these articles, my informant assured me, were offered to the snake in regular succession, one after the other, the worshipper repeating the while certain *mantras* or incantations. Having offered all these gifts, the worshipper prostrates himself before the snake, and begging for pardon if he has ever offended against him, craves that the snake will continue his favour upon him and protect him from every danger.

The Deshpandia or chief Pandia (Putwari) of the parganah, who was in attendance with the Settlement Camp, also got for me the following *mantra* or verse to be used in the antidote for a snake-bite or to charm snakes.

ओ  
सर्पमन्त्र ।

तद्वकीकर्तुर्या चरणी बीर दंडालस्त्राद्वालो खंड खंड उखपर अहो धनात्री ज्ञानी  
गर्वकरा लभनी हाती सपधराल अस्ति तद्वकीका बड़लरंगाले बड़तशिंगाले जहताचा  
गर्वले फड़ना छौट कोठ नागामीवो भागमासालुडंखजागधरकर पाल त्याटमरी ॥ १ ॥

The village where I was encamped was rich in Tandáhs, mat-enclosures of betel leaf cultivation. The Barís who cultivate the betel-creeper or *Nágballi* or Cobra-creeper, as it is called, are, from their constant contact with the Nag-creeper, supposed to be on terms of friendship and to have influence with the snakes, and are often invoked to assist in curing persons who have offended, and who have consequently been bitten by the snake *deota* or deity. Besides the *mantra* given above, a remedy employed by the Barís is, I was told, to slap on the mouth the person who brings the news of the accident! These Barís are generally snake-worshippers, and as snakes are often found in the cool, well-watered and covered enclosures, in which the delicate creeper is grown, this desire to keep on good terms with the deity may readily be understood. I find too that I noted at the same time that those who worshipped snakes also worshipped the ant-hills or mounds of earth thrown up by ants. The holes of these ant-hills are held, correctly or incorrectly I cannot say, to be full of snakes. I should like further information on this point and would enquire whether the worship of ant-hills may not be on account of their pyramidal shape and hence connection with Śiva worship?

The "Nág panchami" or 5th day of the moon in Sawan is a great fête in the city of Nágpúr, and more than usual license is indulged in on that day. Rough pictures of snakes, in all sorts of shapes and positions, are sold and distributed, something after the manner of Valentines. I cannot find any copies of these queer sketches, and, if I could, they would hardly be fit to be reproduced. Mr. J. W. Neill, C. S., the present Commissioner of Nagpur, was good enough to send me some superior Valentines of this class, and I submit them now for the inspection of the Society. It will be seen that in these paintings, some of which are not without merit either as to design or execution, no human figures are introduced. In the ones I have seen, in days gone by, the positions of the women with the snakes were of the most indecent description and left no doubt that, so far as the idea represented in these sketches was concerned, the cobra was regarded as the phallus. In the pictures now sent the snakes will be seen represented in congress, in the well known form of the Caduceus or Esculapian rod. Then the many-headed snake, drinking from the jewelled cup, takes one back to some of the symbols of the mysteries of bygone days? The snake twisted round the tree and the second snake approaching it are suggestive of the temptation and fall? But I am not unmindful of the pitfalls from which Wilford suffered, and I quite see that it is not impossible that this picture may be held to be not strictly Hindu in its treatment. Still the tree and the serpent are on the brass models, which accompany this paper and which I have already shewn are to be purchased

in the Benares Brass Bazaar of to-day—many hundreds of miles away from Nágpur where these Valentines were drawn. I am in correspondence with Mr. J. W. Neill on the subject, and hope to send some further information regarding the meaning of what may certainly be said to be these curious pictures of the Cobra. I shall be interested to learn how far their character may be considered by those, who are competent to judge on this subject, to connect them with the worship of Mahádeo?

I have now to state briefly the direction in which I would desire that these imperfect notes should be considered to lead. As the Society know, I have for some time past been endeavouring to collect information on the points of resemblance between the tumuli of India and the well known types of Scandinavia, of Brittany and of the British Isles. In my paper on the Kumáon Rock markings, besides noting the resemblance between the cup markings of India and of Europe, I hazarded the theory that the concentric circles and certain curious markings of what some have called the “jews-harp” type, so common in Europe, are traces of Phallic worship, carried there by tribes whose hosts descended into India, pushed forward into the remotest corners of Europe and as their traces now seem to suggest, found their way on to the American Continent also.

Whether these markings really ever were intended to represent the Phallus and the Yoni, must always remain a matter of opinion. But I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the reception with which this, to many somewhat unpleasant, theory has met in some of the Antiquarian Societies of Europe.

No one who compares the stone Yonis of Benares, sent herewith, with the engravings on the first page of the work on the rock markings of Northumberland and Argyleshire, published privately by the Duke of Northumberland, President of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, which is also sent for the inspection of the Society, will deny that there is an extraordinary resemblance between the conventional symbol of Siva worship of to-day and the ancient markings on the rocks, menhirs and cromlechs of Northumberland, of Scotland, of Ireland, of Brittany, of Scandinavia and other parts of Europe.

And a further examination of the forms of the cromlechs and tumuli and menhirs will suggest that the tumuli themselves were intended to indicate the symbols of the Mahádeo and yoni, conceived in no obscene sense, but as representing regeneration, the new life, “life out of death, life everlasting,” which those buried in the tumuli, facing towards the sun in its meridian, were expected to enjoy in the hereafter. Professor Stephens, the well known Scandinavian Antiquary, writing to me recently, speaks of these symbols as follows :

"The pieces (papers) you were so good as to send me were very valuable and welcome. There can be no doubt that it is to India we are to look for the solution of many of our difficult archaeological questions.

"But especially interesting is your paper on the Ancient Rock Sculpturings. I believe that you are quite right in your views. Nay I go further. I think that the Northern Bulb-stones are explained by the same combination. I therefore send you by this post a copy of the part for 1874 of the Swedish Archaeological Journal containing Baron Herculius' excellent dissertation on these objects. Though in Swedish, you can easily understand it, at least the greater part, by reading it as a kind of broad north-English. At all events you can examine the many excellent wood-cuts. I look upon these things as late conventionalized abridgements of the Linga and Yoni, life out of death, life everlasting—thus a fitting ornament for the graves of the departed.

"In the same way the hitherto not understood small stones with 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 etc. distinct *cups* cut in them (vulgarly called chipping-stones, which they never were or could be) I regard as the same thing for *domestic* worship, house *altars*, the family *Penates*."

I may note that this distinguished antiquary has adopted as a monogram for his writing paper a "menhir," round which a serpent is coiled, evidently copied from old Scandinavian remains.

Many who indignantly repudiate the idea of the prevalence of phallic worship among our remote ancestors, hold that these symbols represent the snake or the sun. But admitting this, may not the snake, after all, have been but a symbol of the phallus? And the sun,\* the invigorating

\* Since writing this I have come across the following remarks by Tod in the Asiatic Researches: 'The Suroi were in fact the Sauras, inhabiting the peninsula of Saurashtra, the Saurastrene and Syrastrene already quoted from the Periplus, and the kingdom immediately adjoining, that of Tessarioustus, to the eastward. That the *Syros* of Saurashtra, and the Syrians of Asia Minor had the same origin, appears from the worship of Surya, or the Sun. I have little doubt, we have more than one "city of the sun"\*\* in this tract; indeed, the only temples of the Sun I have met with in India, are in Saurashtra. The temple raised to Bál in Tadmor in the Desert, by Solomon, where he worshipped "Bál and Ashtoreth, the strange gods of the Sidonians," was the Bál-nat'h, or Great God of the Hindus, the Vivifier, the Sun: and the Pillar erected to him "in every grove, and on every high hill;" the Lingam, or Phallus, the emblem of Bál; Bál-nat'h, Bál-césari,† or as Bál-Iswara, the Osiris of the Egyptians; and as Nand-Iswara, their Serapis, or Lord of the Sacred Bull; Nanda, or Apis "the Calf of Egypt," which the chosen people bowed to "when their hearts were turned away from the Lord."

\* Heliopolis (Suryapúra) was one capital of Syria.

† Hence its name Bal-bee, Bécisan idol: so Ferishta derives it, the idol Bál. This, the capital in future times of the unfortunate Zenobia, was translated by the Greeks to Palmyra; for it is but a translation of Tad-tar, or Tál-mor, and can have an Indian derivation, from Tar, or Tál, the Date, or Palmyra-tree; and Mor, the head, chief, or crown.

‡ Cesari, a lion. Hence the royal appellation of the Cæsars; and Lion (Siu'ha) Lords of India, have the same meaning.

power of nature, has ever, I believe, been considered to represent the same idea, not necessarily obscene, but the great mystery of nature, the life transmitted from generation to generation, or, as Professor Stephen puts it, "life out of death, life everlasting." The same idea in fact which, apart from any obscene conception, causes the rude Mahádeo and yoni to be worshipped daily by hundreds of thousands of Hindus.

In a most interesting paper recently read at the Society of Antiquaries of France, some extracts of which I am now preparing for the Society, the authors M. M. Edouard Piette and Julien Sacaze have actually discovered the remains of phallic worship still existing among the people of the Pyrenees, the existence of which in Scandinavia, in days gone by, has already been brought to the notice of the Society by Dr. Rájendralála Mitra. These Archaeologists have established the fact that to this day the menhir is still reverenced in the Pyrenees as the phallus. And referring to certain cromlechs in the neighbourhood, M. M. Piette and Sacaze hold that the circle, and central stone represent the "Sun." The sun, they suppose, was the sacred symbol of these tribes, and they suggest that the tumuli and sacred places of the race, were raised in this form, just as we now build our churches in the shape of a cross and place the sign of the cross on the graves of our dead. Whilst I was writing these very remarks on the Kumáoñ markings, M. M. Piette and Sacaze were noticing the same points in regard to the tumuli of the Pyrenees. There are not wanting other remarkable points of resemblance between their paper and the Indian remains, with which M. Bertrand, President of the Society of Antiquaries of France, was much struck, and which induced him to send me, in September 1877, the proof sheets of the Proceedings of the Society. But the circumstance to which, in connection with the serpent worship of the above notes, I attach the greatest importance is, that I find that in many of these groups of tumuli, the circle is found with the serpent coiled round it.

"Thus Bál was the type of productiveness, and Ashtoreth, as destruction, most probably that of the Eight (Ashta) armed mother. A'shta-Tárá-Devi", or the radiated Goddess of Destiny, is always depicted as trampling on the monster Bhainsásúr, aided by her lion (when she resembles Cybele, or the Phrygian Diana) and in each of her eight arms holding a weapon of destruction: but I have ventured to pursue the subject elsewhere. I shall merely remark on the Suroi of Menander, that amongst the thirty-six royal races of Hindus, especially pertaining to Saur'ashtra, is that of Sarweya, as written in the Bhákhá, but classically Suryaswa. The historian of the Court of Anhul-warra\* thus introduces it: "And thou, Sarweya, essence of the martial races." No doubt, it was, with many others, of Scythic origin, perhaps from Zariaspa, or Bactria, introduced at a period when the worship of Bál, or the Sun, alone was common to the nations east and west of the Indus; when, as Pinkerton says, a grand Scythic empire extended to the Ganges. Here I must drop Apollodotus and Menander, for the history of their exploits extends no further than the Suroi."—*Tod in Asiatic Researches*.

\* Nehrwara of D'Anville and Renaudot.

May not this represent the serpent encircling the Mahádeo as now seen in India and in the form which during many centuries has perhaps not undergone any great change?

A further detailed consideration of this view must be deferred until I can submit to the Society the result of the enquiries of M. M. Piette and Sacaze, many of the points of which, in connection with the remains discovered in India, cannot, I believe, be considered other than most remarkable.

And I may add in conclusion that no one who has been in this country and who has noticed the monolith Mahádeos of the Western Gháts of the Himálayas and other parts of India, can fail to be struck with the resemblance that the menhirs of Carnac\* in Brittany and its neighbourhood bear to the Siva emblems of India. I visited these remarkable remains when at home last year, and was quite taken aback by their resemblance to well-known Indian types. The monoliths of Scotland covered with what I believe to be "Mahádeo" symbols are of the same class. Added to this, in the recesses of the Pyrennees, the people whose language suggests their descent from the Tribes who erected the tumuli and menhirs, not only in this neighbourhood but also in other parts of Europe, still preserve traditions connected with these monoliths and have actually retained some traces of what I will call Siva worship. With this evidence, added to the points noticed in my paper on the Junapani Barrows and the Kumáon markings, the connection between the marks in India and Europe may then, I hope, be considered tolerably complete.

\* I may be permitted to be egotistical enough to note, that Carnac, the surname which my grandfather added to his own, by sign-manual on succeeding to General Carnac's property, is the Celtic "Carnej," "Cairn," or collection of monoliths, for which the village whence General Carnac took his name is celebrated. The family crest, a crescent and dagger, bears an extraordinary resemblance to the markings on some of the menhirs.



Read March 19. 1850 -

He is right as to serpent worship, according to my knowledge forced upon me while in India. We get many serpent brasses together at Benares, and share them. My lot are in a glass case at Midway, worse to about the house. I abstain from inquiring my knowledge. This author quotes all that he knows.





